

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02901 140835Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ICAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 H-01
NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
EUR-12 OES-09 EB-08 /074 W
-----006591 151353Z /41

R 140733Z SEP 78
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2026
INFO USICA WASHDC
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 2901

HONG KONG FOR ICA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SEDUC, PINR, CH, US
SUBJ: U.S.-PRC STUDENT EXCHANGES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING

SUMMARY: PRC EDUCATION MINISTER LIU HSI-YAO TOLD THE VISITING U.S. ENGINEERING EDUCATION DELEGATION THAT THE PRC WOULD WELCOME ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING TEAMS FROM THE U.S. TO HELP PREPARE CHINESE STUDENTS FOR STUDY ABROAD. LIU ALSO TOLD THE DELEGATION THAT THE PRC WAS PREPARED TO RECEIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS AND SAID CHINESE OFFICIALS WOULD LIKE AS MUCH ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE STUDENTS' PROPOSED COURSES OF STUDY. IN A SEPTEMBER 12 CONVERSATION WITH USLO OFFICER, MFA U.S. AFFAIRS DIVISION DEPUTY LIEN CHENG-PAO SAID THE PRC WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THIS INFORMATION BEFORE THE OCTOBER DEPARTURE OF THE CHOU PEI-YUAN DELEGATION. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING CALL BY THE U.S. ENGINEERING EDUCATION DELEGATION TO THE PRC ON EDUCATION MINISTER LIU HSIU-YAO SEPTEMBER 12, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS THAT CHINESE STUDENTS GOING TO THE U.S. FOR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PEKING 02901 140835Z

HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD MEET. U.S. DELEGATION MEMBERS SUGGESTED THAT THE CHINESE SHOULD CONSIDER SENDING STUDENTS TO A FEW EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S. WHICH ALREADY HAD SPECIALIZED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS FOR LANGUAGE TRAINING RANGING FROM THREE TO SIX MONTHS OR MORE. THEREAFTER, THESE STUDENTS COULD PURSUE THEIR STUDIES IN A WIDE RANGE OF OTHER EDUCATIONAL

INSTITUTIONS. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT SOME OF THESE ENGLISH TRAINING PROGRAMS WERE SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH THE TECHNICAL VOCABULARY REQUIRED FOR ENGINEERING OR SCIENTIFIC STUDIES.

2. PROFESSOR BAUM OF UCLA ALSO NOTED THAT THESE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING INSTITUTES WERE ABLE TO SEND SPECIALIZED TEAMS OF LINGUISTS AND OTHER HIGHLY TRAINED ENGLISH TEACHING EXPERTS TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES TO ESTABLISH ENGLISH TEACHING PROGRAMS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF UCLA HAD BEEN THAT IT WAS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE TO HAVE SUCH LINGUISTICALLY TRAINED SPECIALISTS ESTABLISH ENGLISH TRAINING PROGRAMS THAN SIMPLY TO HIRE FLUENT ENGLISH SPECIALISTS WITHOUT SPECIALIZED TRAINING.

3. EDUCATION MINISTER LIU WAS RECEPTIVE TO THIS IDEA AND SAID THAT CHINA WOULD WELCOME SUCH ENGLISH TRAINING TEAMS FROM THE U.S. TO ASSIST IN PREPARING CHINESE STUDENTS FOR STUDY ABROAD. HE FREELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CHINESE STUDENTS AT PRESENT WERE ILL-PREPARED BOTH ACADEMICALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY FOR STUDY ABROAD AND MIGHT WELL REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL PERIODS OF PREPARATORY TRAINING. IN THIS CONNECTION, U.S. DELEGATION LEADER JOSEPH PETTIT STRESSED THAT THE PRC SHOULD CONSIDER SENDING OLDER STUDENTS IN THEIR UPPER TWENTIES AND THIRTIES IN ORDER TO AVOID SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAD ENCOUNTERED WITH YOUNGER CHINESE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PEKING 02901 140835Z

EXCHANGE STUDENTS.

4. MINISTER LIU ALSO STATED THAT THE PRC DID NOT WANT THE STUDENTS IT SENT TO THE U.S. TO LIVE TOGETHER IN SMALL GROUPS BUT RATHER TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN DORMITORIES WITH AMERICAN STUDENTS. U.S. DELEGATION MEMBERS SAID THAT THIS WOULD POSE NO PROBLEMS ON THE U.S. SIDE. THEY JOKINGLY ADDED THAT WHILE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, THEY COULD NOT VOUCH FOR THE IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS' MORALE. THE CHINESE DID NOT SEEM DISTURBED BY THIS LATTER POINT.

5. MINISTER LIU ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PRC WAS PREPARED TO RECEIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS IN RETURN BUT SAID THAT THE CHINESE WOULD LIKE AS MUCH ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE PROSPECTIVE FIELDS OF STUDY OF SUCH STUDENTS (MFA U.S. AFFAIRS DIVISION DEPUTY LIEN CHENG-PAO ALSO QUERIED USLO OFFICER ON THIS POINT IN A SEPTEMBER 12 RECEPTION AT USLO. LIEN SAID THE PRC WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW MANY STUDENTS (AND THEIR AREAS OF STUDY) THE U.S. PLANS TO SEND TO THE PRC. LIEN SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THIS INFORMATION BEFORE THE CHOU PEI-YUAN DELEGATION LEFT FOR THE

U.S. IN OCTOBER).

6. DR. PETTIT INQUIRED CONCERNING THE HEALTH OF VICE EDUCATION MINISTER LI CHI, WHO HOSTED THE WELCOME BANQUET FOR THE U.S. DELEGATION BUT ENTERED THE HOSPITAL THE FOLLOWING DAY. VICE MINISTER LI, WHO HAS A HISTORY OF HEART PROBLEMS, IS SCHEDULED TO BE THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE CHINESE EDUCATION DELEGATION TO THE U.S. IN OCTOBER HEADED BY PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT CHOU PEI-YUAN. MINISTER LIU SAID LI'S HEALTH PROBLEMS WERE NOT SERIOUS AND WOULD NOT PREVENT HIM FROM TRAVELLING TO THE U.S. WITH THE DELEGATION. HE POINTEDLY ADDED THAT LI WOULD BE TRAVELLING IN HIS CAPACITY AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHINESE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION RATHER THAN AS VICE MINISTER OF EDUCATION. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 PEKING 02901 140835Z

7. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THAT THE CHINESE HAVE OFFICIALLY INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO HAVE U.S. SPECIALISTS ASSIST THEM IN ESTABLISHING MORE EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS. MINISTER LIU SEEMED PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT CHINESE DEFICIENCIES IN THIS RESPECT, REFERRING SEVERAL TIMES TO THE FACT THAT FOREIGN VISITORS HAD CRITICIZED THE ENGLISH TEACHING PROGRAMS CARRIED ON CHINESE TV FOR USING TECHNIQUES THAT WERE THIRTY YEARS OUT OF DATE. LIU'S COMMENTS SUGGEST THAT THE ISSUE OF U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR PRC ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS COULD USEFULLY BE DISCUSSED DURING THE VISIT BY THE CHOU PEI-YUAN DELEGATION IN OCTOBER. WOODCOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EDUCATION, ENGINEERING, ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING, FOREIGN STUDENT EXCHANGE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PEKING02901
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780376-0061
Format: TEL
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780966/aaaaccpd.tel
Line Count: 149
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4a0f2250-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1432896
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S.-PRC STUDENT EXCHANGES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING SUMMARY: PRC EDUCATION MINISTER LIU HSI-YAO TOLD THE VISITING U.S. ENGINEERING EDUCATION DELEGATION THAT THE PRC
TAGS: SEDU, PINR, CH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4a0f2250-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014